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JESUS AND HIS MODERN CRITICS

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As our buildings today bear the impress of Greek genius in architecture, and our law in great measure holds the form that was given it under the Roman Empire, so do religion and morals with us still feel the influence of the Jew. Through Christianity that strain of spiritual life which had been nurtured under a great line of Hebrew prophets was taken over to and planted in the new soil of Graeco-Roman life: so that its heroes finally displaced the heroes of classical antiquity and its forms of thought, in part at least, superseded those which belonged by natural inheritance to pagan faith. The beginner of the movement which accomplished this change was Jesus of Nazareth, who thus made himself one of the foremost figures in the world's affairs.

As part of this process of getting itself rooted in a new habitat, and by way of adaptation to alien conditions, Christianity underwent considerable modification of form. First it was worked over into somewhat different shape in the mind of Paul. Petrine Christianity, no doubt, was held strictly within Judaic lines, and was designed only for "home consumption." The Pauline form introduced changes which better fitted it for a "foreign market." A later and more profound change was made by those influences which our fourth gospel represents. In this new guise it was such a different thing that it became thenceforth, almost of necessity, a stranger in the house of its birth. These modifications of it, innocently assumed to be its original shape, have lived on till our own day.

And now a new force is being brought to bear upon it whose ultimate effect we cannot wholly measure. The new science of historical criticism has come into this field, possessing an equipment and a determination which blind tradition will be unable to resist. One of the first facts to attract its attention was that

change of form which Christianity had undergone in getting itself transformed from Eastern to Western life; and one of its first problems was to retranslate these later versions of its message back into a primitive gospel.

This has been a problem of no small size; because, for one thing, our sources of information about the land and the people in the time of Christ are none too abundant; and also because the earliest literature of Christianity which we possess comes from that period in which its transplanting had been partially effected. Nevertheless, historical criticism has made substantial progress with its task; and the great ferment produced by such conclusions as it has already announced is evidence enough of marked changes in the life of the church that are yet to be enforced.

None of us can see with perfect clearness what is going forward in the church of our day. Still, it is well for us to use what wisdom we have to get our proper bearings under the forces that are shaping the thought of the age. This new science has demonstrations to make, and in the end is very sure to triumph over every kind of opposition.

In making some estimate of what historical criticism has done or is likely to do for Christianity, our first question is what (if anything) it gives us as the spring and source out of which this spiritual movement originally came. So far as it can go behind Greek and Pauline forms of Christian faith, what does it find to be the historic reality which they worked over into the tradition of later times? Our second question concerns the worth of this historic basis to the modern world, and the probable future of the church having that for a foundation.

First, is there anything in the early Christian tradition which can be received and held as valid history? Because at the present time there is considerable disposition to look upon the whole gospel story as a fabric of myths; so largely spun and woven out of subjective idealism that any element of fact it contains may be treated as a negligible quantity. Thus Mr. Anderson, in the *Hibbert Journal* for January of this present year, takes the position that almost nothing of the real story of Jesus of Nazareth is now recoverable. He seems to imply indeed that,

if we could recover it, it might be found too poor or cheap to deserve serious consideration. Meanwhile what we actually have in our possession is a great spiritual drama evolved out of the inner consciousness of the Early Church; a purely fictitious creation embodying only certain deep insights of the human soul.

This view of the case appears to be, in its origin, a gigantic bluff made by the upholders of traditional creeds in order to save their citadel from further attack; and one observes with mingled sorrow and amusement how well the bluff seems to work. The Christian world has stood these many centuries, without question, on the historic basis of its faith. Now comes this new authority, which the church has learned it cannot altogether ignore, to tell it that, as it understands the life of Christ, that narration is not history. What shall the church answer to this assertion?

Naturally enough many are now replying, "Well, why after all do we require any historic basis? The beautiful symbol is worth more than any mere narrative of fact. We freely give you whatever you can extract from your higher criticism and your historical research. It is not much that you can reclaim from the dust heaps of the past; but, whatever it is, take it for your pains, and make the most of it. We cling to that mighty structure which we know as Christianity, and which, of whatever substance it may be composed, is better than anything to be put together out of the fragments of what you are pleased to call historic truth."

It is a good bluff, bravely put on, and for a time will suffice to hold the fort. It is rather amusing, however, to see other people, always on the hunt for some last new thing, taking up this subterfuge and solemnly proclaiming it as that great discovery which shows us the next step of the world's advance. Because, as a matter of fact, the only body of opinion which can be regarded in this matter as having some weight of authority stands uncaptured and undismayed by this idea of the mythical origin of Christianity.

The historical students themselves, who have raised all this rumpus, have as a class never swerved from the conviction with

which they began,—that something once happened in Judea rather out of the common order of events to give Christianity its start, and that they could find out with some approach to accuracy what that happening was. They are the experts in this investigation. Their feeling about historical reality is worth any amount of loose popular conjecture; and, on the whole, they give no aid and comfort whatever to the notion that the gospel story grew up out of the imagination of a religious cult in the Graeco-Roman world. Their opinion ought to go far to settle the matter, at least until some new discovery is made; and if we pay heed to the reasons they have to give for the faith that is in them, we certainly shall not join in the cry of a distressed orthodoxy,—that, since there is no historical basis we are free to choose the best poetry within our reach.

The fact that the story, as it now stands, contains parts of a somewhat different story, inconsistent with the purpose for which the later version was proposed, is evidence enough that it is a revamped narrative of fact, not a mere fanciful drama of the soul. Schmiedel's "nine foundation pillars" have never been removed, and they are not likely to be overturned. Moreover, students of the gospel narrative are deeply impressed that the shadings of the story are often too subtle to be reasonably ascribed to a legendary source. The absence of contemporary witnesses in the general literature of the time is easily accounted for. The career of Jesus was not likely to attract the notice of historians of the age. It was too brief, too obscure, too little attended by any portent or disturbance to have found its way into their chronicles.

Altogether the scholarship best entitled to our confidence tells us that Jesus of Nazareth really lived, and that the main outline of his life-story is about as valid history as any record of the past that we possess.

It is not proposed here to set forth that story as understood by scholars of the present day. Suffice it to say, in general terms, that he is now presented to us as a man of his time rather than as a kind of universal king. He has been regarded as one who not only saw life from the divine point of view, but as one who saw it with divine omniscience of all its future and its past. It has been

thought that in all his teaching he was consciously legislating for the whole world of men. Although through his mother he was doubtless of Jewish birth, it has not been supposed that there was anything of the Jew in his mental and moral make-up. In the Christian imagination he has been a "man without a country"; one without special attachment to any national tradition, holding all races equally in his regard.

Modern scholarship places his life once more in its true setting as that of the latest and greatest among Hebrew prophets. It makes him first of all a loyal son of Israel, a child of the age which bore him. It sees him immersed in the ideas and struggles and ambitions of his own people. It does not suppose that he knew much about the world beyond the borders of his native land, and it does affirm that he saw life with such eyes as his Jewish ancestry had given him. This, in a broad way, is the change that modern thought has made in the picture of his mind and his career.

It is a change from which many infer that the story of his life is now practically discharged of its whole significance. What can a Jew of the first century have to say to us of the twentieth century? The world in which he lived has passed away. Many at least of its ideas have become obsolete. How is it possible that one who believed, for instance, in demoniacal possession can instruct or enlighten the man of today?

But if we make too much of the limitations of time and place, we destroy the value of historic instances altogether. Does one say it is another world which has come into existence since his day? Yes! But it is a very different world that has arisen since Washington's day. We do not consider his words entirely out of date. Or, since we are near the centennial anniversary of another famous man, we may remind ourselves of the impression that widely prevails as of a new heaven and a new earth that have come into being since Theodore Parker's day. Are we not frequently told that Darwinism has revolutionized the whole world of thought?

The truth is, however, that if a man be big enough in his own place, he is never out of date for those who have discernment enough to see somewhat beneath the fashion of the garments that he wears. What is of the moment in his life and

thought is of slight importance, as compared with qualities that fit every age; and therefore possesses monumental significance for all who come after him. To say that because a man is deeply absorbed in the situation of the world as he knows it, or of that little part of it only with which he is immediately concerned; and that because he does not see with perfect accuracy what the outcome of his life-struggle is to be, therefore his example can set no beacon for other men to observe in the different trains of circumstance with which they are involved, amounts to saying that no great life of the past can teach us anything.

Now, to speak of nothing else, we may specify four instances in which the thought of Jesus rose to the very highest level of human consciousness; reached a height indeed which, so far as we can see, stands as the topmost summit of human thinking. First, his thought of God is ideally perfect. Religion has never found and never will find a better object of worship. His "Father in Heaven," as depicted in the matchless parables of the gospels, marks an ultimate achievement of religious idealism. Secondly, his thought of man as God's child is equally sublime. The unfolding of that thought discloses the loftiest ideas of human nature that the mind can form. And it is evident that he did unfold the thought; it was with him no mere "glittering generality." Thirdly, his teaching about the relation that should exist between God and man leaves nothing to be desired. Even his practical sagacity in counselling the soul how it should find this right solution remains of immense consequence to all students of the higher life; though in the nature of the case such counsels change as conditions vary. Finally, in finding love to be the heart and essence of all right relationship between man and man, Jesus rose to the highest reach of spiritual attainment. In this direction nothing is to be had better than he has given us.

And it takes nothing from his glory to say that these ideas have found expression again and again in the course of man's spiritual development; any more than it cheapens the beauty of some great model of female loveliness to say that other women have eyes and lips and noses of the same general pattern. There the ideas are in the mind of Jesus in what we can only regard as their perfect form. We know not how to improve upon his

statement of a single one of them. We have no reason to say that he borrowed them from any source whatever. They grew out of his own life; and they are among the very greatest things that could grow out of any life.

Of the thought thus briefly sketched I am ready to say, in the language of another (Professor Henry Jones), "Its central truth was so great and its consequences so momentous that it contains the substantial virtue and essence of all idealism." It seems to me that this writer gives us what is sure to be the ultimate verdict of rational criticism when he goes on to say, "It was the boldest idealism, and it was the most unflinchingly held in the face of every doubt and every tragedy, that was ever taught to man." "No man ever lived who was more deeply possessed by a great thought, or who lived in its service and its power with such sublime consistency, and with such an all-challenging courage."

The person of whom such words may be justly and fitly spoken surely stands in the highest rank among great souls of the past; and in view of such supreme excellence, in mind and character, the attempt to show defects in his ethical or religious sense appears to me trivial. It may be granted that he cherished some mistaken expectation of a return to earth to finish in person the work which he had begun. In this his mind was probably swayed by the current Messianic dream. But in this he was no common fanatic, and he professed no very clear foresight of the coming time.

Moreover this expectation produced little, if any, appreciable effect upon the character of his moral teaching; for the charge that his precepts have only an *ad interim* quality, and are largely vitiated by his belief in the coming end of the world (to which approaching catastrophe alone they were designed to run), is simply absurd. Every reasonable mind knows that he was constantly busy trying to illustrate, by word and deed, what he considered the kingdom of heaven to be. He had a splendid vision, both of individual and of social righteousness, which was always foremost in his thoughts. It was no vision that he could set forth in formal rules, such as the scribes and rabbis loved, but one that he sought to convey by parable and paradox

and glowing allegory, that his disciples might catch the spirit of it all. So clearly was this the main purpose of his life and so much was he intent upon it, that in summing up his moral and religious precepts any views that he held about a "second coming" may be safely left out of the reckoning.

With regard to the claim that he was the Christ, the Messiah of God, it is difficult to see how this can be justly turned against him. The critics here are not yet agreed as to the facts, some doubt being entertained whether he did make that claim. But he was crucified for something, and the fear and distrust of him which produced that judicial murder seem rather inexplicable unless he had set up, more or less openly, a Messianic claim. But is any one in position to say that this was a mistake on his part? Surely the Messianic idea played a great part in the early history of the new faith. If there is a Providence in the affairs of men, may not this have been a part of it? Meantime it is highly significant that in his use of this idea he so spiritualized the popular hope as to transform a rather cheap and tawdry picture of millennial glory into an ideal on which the spiritual vision can still linger with delight.

These questions, as to his Messiahship and his expectation of the approaching end of the world, are well worth talking about; though one does not see that they have much bearing on that religious idealism which was his great gift to subsequent time. When, however, it comes down to the criticism which alleges that in giving his indignation against the Pharisees free rein, or that in what he said in answer to a question about divorce he displayed a lack of regard for womankind,—is not that rather poor stuff? However interesting it may be to those who produce it, it will probably never enter into the world's serious thought.

One consideration alone lends to it a kind of momentary relevance. The Christian world now entertains a purely theoretical belief in the absolute sinlessness of Christ. There is no possible way to establish the accuracy of that belief. Even if we had a full record of every thought and every deed of his life, so many different moral estimates of that record would be likely to arise that complete sinlessness would lie beyond the realm of convincing demonstration. From what we know of the mind

of Christ we gain an impression of the greatest moral purity. Whether he stood entirely without fault we can only say as we make that assertion an article of pure faith.

Some people, it would seem, are much annoyed when instances of such faith are brought under their notice, and feel an irresistible impulse to shatter it. But, really, to go after such game as this is not much better than the hunting of the snark. There is a strong tendency in human nature to deal in superlatives, and to say "most" when it only means "very much." The dogma of the sinlessness of Christ can have no other reasonable meaning than that of the words ascribed to Pilate, "I find no fault in him." Is it worth while to attack that dogma by seeking to find some small instance in which Jesus was possibly wrong? In that kind of shot there may be a sharp recoil, and some question may arise at which end of the gun most damage is likely to be done. Fault-finding of a petty sort removes attention from those greater things where emphasis belongs. One may signalize his own independence of mind in this fashion; but for my part I think no other form of color-blindness is worse than that which sees only the strong red and green of courage and intellectual honesty, as if the moral spectrum contained no other colors.

One who undertakes to do damage to what in the eyes of others is a great ideal, should be very sure of just pretext for his action. And this consideration may lead us to take up the other question with which we began: What is the worth of this life of Jesus to the modern world? How does it matter whether or not there is a Jesus of history, and of what importance is he to the religion of this and the coming time? To go at once to the heart of this question, probably one's sense of the worth of the personality of Christ will depend much upon his sense of the value of personal influence in the general life of mankind. This is so large a theme that we cannot here follow it outside the limits of our immediate field of inquiry.

It becomes more and more evident, as the various religions of the world are better understood, that the one unique possession of Christianity has been the picture it has cherished of its Founder's character and career. Its ideas are to be found paralleled or

parodied on every hand. Scholars are at a loss to say why Christianity has survived, when other faiths have perished, if the explanation must be limited to the kinds of religious belief which have been held and advocated. To go back to the beginning, we are told by those who ought to know that, so far as moral and religious teachings are concerned, it is somewhat puzzling to determine why the name of Rabbi Hillel should have fallen into obscurity, while that of Jesus rose to commanding fame. Unless we are content to stay in that last ditch of unreason, provided for us by the supposition that things merely happened thus and so, we are driven to the assertion that there was something in the personality of Jesus which appealed to men, as the personality of that other Jewish teacher did not.

When we take up the work of Paul, we see at once how it all centred in the person of Christ. It is true that his writings contain little reference to incidents in the life of Jesus. Whether or not he was familiar with what eye-witnesses had to say on this subject, that earthly life appears to have been mostly of secondary consequence to him, as compared with the impression of a spiritual Jesus that was somehow burned into his soul on the way to Damascus. Still, however conceived, the figure of Jesus rose above everything else in his regard; and it was the figure of a person of unquestioned reality. We may now say, if we like, that his idea of Jesus was more or less a dream. It needs to be remembered, however, that this is not at all the view which Paul himself held. Jesus Christ was to him no mere bright ideal of human excellence, but a most real and vivid personality; one who had walked the earth and suffered death upon the cross. Had it been otherwise, no shade of Saul of Tarsus would now haunt the memory of travellers who wander over the ruins of Ephesus, or stand on Mars' Hill at Athens.

Coming to the period, later than Paul, when Christianity was competing with Mithraism and the worship of Isis for supremacy throughout the Roman Empire, what shall we say determined that struggle? Note the words of Professor Emerton, a wise and careful student. "Christianity," he says, "shared with these other cults the concentration of thought upon one single redeeming

personality. But the immense and decisive difference was that this personality was, in the Christian scheme, not merely a divine abstraction requiring to be represented by symbols and sacrifices, but also an absolute and perfect historical human being. That was the one fundamental fact which not all the speculations of all the theological schools could obscure."

Here is an opinion to tie to amid the floods of loose talk with which the world is deluged, for one may judge it to be an opinion that will hold. It would be easy enough to supplement this with a great array of competent observers and witnesses whose testimony would be that, in their judgment, throughout the whole life of the church the personality of Jesus had exercised commanding power. Christianity is, of course, a highly complex affair. But the real key to the combination of those elements of which it is composed, the key which thus far has guaranteed the stability of that combination, is the person of Christ.

What other view of religious history is reasonable in the light of what we know of the natural behavior of men? Everywhere and at all times a great personality is the best rallying-point which the units of the social mass can find, about which to gather. It is hard for these units to combine and stay together within the bond of common belief. Differences of thought soon arise to drive them apart; and so strong is this disruptive influence that no organization long endures apart from allegiance to those persons who represent to the common mind its spirit and purpose.

It has become a kind of instinct with men to follow such personal leadership in political affairs. They have a feeling of helplessness without it. When the name of some prominent leader has become a rallying cry for the masses, many who would be glad to get rid of him are afraid to let him go, realizing the difficulty of transferring this loyalty to any other object. Let any one who thinks that personalism is of slight consequence in a democracy study Bryanism and what it stands for. It is not that any one man can, by his own might, so "bestride the narrow world like a Colossus"; it is that many men who desire to stand and act together find often in personal allegiance not merely their strongest but their only bond.

A great personality is for the common mind its best symbol

of the things it most cares for; its most comprehensive and satisfactory definition of such spiritual values as are precious in its sight. And this appears to be true whether it be the prize-fighters' world or the communion of saints which is taken for purposes of illustration. It ought not, therefore, to be to us a singular phenomenon that the great religions of this world are so associated with the names of their founders, and that this personal influence of these men has remained so much the life and strength of all their following.

To my own mind the problem of the future of Christianity presents itself in very simple guise. It is mainly the question whether that Jesus of history, now presented by modern scholars to the thought of the church, can serve, as the half-mythological figure of Christ has served in time past, to inspire and unite men for such work as the Church is set to do. If the proper answer to this question be an affirmative one, then I should hold it probable that we stand at the beginning of a new development of Christianity, of quite as much worth to the world as any phase of it which lies behind us. If, on the other hand, this question must be answered in the negative, then I should say that nothing is left to this ancient spiritual movement but gradual retirement from the world's affairs. In that case it would perhaps be most fitting for those of us who profess to be Christians, of what is called the "liberal" kind, to look at each other with what Emerson once called "eyes of speculation," and wonder what we are doing "in this gallery."

I do not say that I know what answer to this question the future will give. I do say that there is ground for a reasonable hope and faith in the possibility of starting Christianity upon a new career; and I declare that, in the sight of those who are willing to commit themselves to that venture, there is a goal to be reached, a prize to be won, which is one of the most splendid inducements ever offered to the courage and loyalty of human hearts. The rebirth of the Christian religion is a magnificent dream. If, through the preaching of a Jesus of history, this renewal of its life can be accomplished, that is a possibility of stupendous significance. And to make trial and test of this possible opening to a larger future seems to me, above everything else, the desig-

nated task of those who now occupy the extreme left wing of Protestantism.

The movements which hold that position began in deep attachment and loyalty to what they understood to be the historic Christ. Down to a very recent time this continued to be a distinguishing feature of their faith. Of late there has come some change; a change sufficiently indicated perhaps by a sentence in one of Mr. Robert's articles, where he says that "the supreme need of the hour, in these matters, is the disengagement of religion from its dependence on historical personalities." At least one probably does not misconstrue the feeling of a certain number of Unitarians, at this time, when one says that they really want to get away from Jesus. He does not mean much to them. They would prefer to cease talking about him, and they are somewhat inclined to suspect insincerity in those who do like to talk of him.

This change may be due to a variety of causes. With us, here in New England, transcendentalism very likely began it. The remedy for Emerson's one-sidedness is generally to be found somewhere in his other-sidedness. But his disciples do not always look for this remedy, and some of his sayings have produced a quite disproportionate effect on their minds. Then, many have been somewhat carried away by the dream of universal religion. To universal religion the Hegelian formula that "being and non-being are identical," appears to be peculiarly applicable. Strip away that particular religious feeling which is the distinguishing face of any existing type of faith, and what is left may be a skeleton of philosophy, more or less identical with other similar skeletons in other kindred faiths; but of religion, in any proper sense of that word, nothing then survives. Of all "forlorn hopes" that of turning Christianity into universal religion is about the most hopeless.

Mysticism has to some seemed the way out. But while we may say of the mystics, in the words of Mark Antony, that they are "all honorable men," we have no reason to think that in the world, as we are called to deal with it, mysticism can ever be a great popular faith. If we are by way of caring anything about large world-movements, or ambitious in any wise to make

our lives count toward the shaping of currents of history, then the ruling purpose with which, for example, Unitarianism began remains the one sure guiding star of "advanced" Christian communions. It is quite certain that whatever new development Christianity is capable of attaining will be brought forth only among those who profess heartfelt allegiance to Jesus of Nazareth.

The attempt to enthrone a Jesus of history, where the Christ of theology has stood, should commend itself to sober minds by the fact that it is in no sense revolutionary. It is the central purpose of Protestantism reasserting itself under the changed conditions of the present day. Protestants have insisted all along that they would only know their Christ as the New Testament actually revealed him. Now comes the time when a new reading of the original documents of our faith compels a new interpretation of them. As Protestants, we must hold to this new knowledge, once we are convinced that modern scholars know what they are talking about. Why should not that simple determination point the way for the church to a new era of constructive triumphs? No doubt they who seem to see a path in this direction will still have to encounter much ridicule. But so many mighty Nimrods have gone forth to hunt liberal Christianity out of existence, its speedy demise has been so often predicted and its funeral has been so many times appointed, that some of us are no longer much frightened by the presence of these cheerful undertakers on the scene. For a plant which is on the verge of extinction liberal Christianity manifests a surprising vigor of growth, in an astonishing number of places.

Of course, when one says that the new Jesus of history can be made to take the place of that Christ which theology has known, he does not mean that any personality, merely as it stands in the critical intelligence of the time, can fill that high office. Men do not dissect their heroes, or treat them like specimens in a museum. In a way they do and must idealize the great persons of history. They must use their imagination, that is to say, to make these characters once more living realities. They will see through the medium of their own affection and reverence any life which greatly appeals to them. May we not become too superstitious

about the "thing in itself"? All things, as we know them, are a compound of qualities which they themselves possess, and of other qualities which reside in the seeing mind. We cannot live without idealism, and it is only a question on what basis of reality our idealism stands. In fact, so far as moral and spiritual affairs are concerned, realism can perform for us no decent service save as it makes the foundation on which a nobler idealism is built.

Historical research, unaided, will not give us a supreme personality such as a great religion seems to demand. But it should be possible for criticism to revise and correct the picture of such a personality without destroying it. No Jesus of history, it is true, will be worth much to coming time unless men are to love him for what he was and what he did. But suppose that love builds anew this ancient image of what a true son of God should be; why should it be calmly assumed that this image is valueless without those precise theological adornments which schoolmen have added to it? At least this lack of worth remains to be proved, and the issue is not yet so far tried out as to justify the lofty scorn with which many affect to regard it.

It is quite possible that men will learn to love Jesus of Nazareth all the more, when they come to see him as one of their own kind; a man with a great word of God in his heart, who died to impart that word to a world which he deeply loved. It is only a few fragments of his life-story which we possess; but they are just those fragments which were first found useful to perpetuate the image of his personality, and out of which, even now, that image can be most easily produced. What does the ordinary man know of Lincoln or Napoleon, save a few anecdotes through which the character of these famous men is revealed? When history has done her best to set forth the whole career of some favorite child of fortune, a half-dozen incidents in which he figured may lend the imagination more help than volumes of laborious record and description. As such incidents in the life of Jesus have been told, over and over, they have taken deep hold of the heart of the Christian world, and an immense amount of pure sentiment has sprung up in answer to the appeal thus made. Surely we are the most foolish of mortals if we now allow that sentiment to go to waste.

One trouble is, perhaps, that we are apt to get more interested in correcting our neighbors than in attending to our own affairs. We see them doing various unwarrantable things, and we get so excited about this that we forget to study how our work should best be done. Let me appeal in this matter from Philip drunk to Philip sober; from the critic who, when he is fighting orthodoxy, thinks religion ought to be "disengaged from historical personalities," to this same critic when in calmer mood he has a clearer vision of fixed values. "Is Jesus to be blamed," he asks, "for the dismal tragedies of the Christian centuries?" And then he says: "For my own part I answer quite frankly,—most assuredly he is not. He, assuming his historicity, has held up the ideal. Amid the savageries of egoism, we catch the vision of a Selfless One; we hear the calm, sweet voice which tells of peace and joy. With that Vision Beautiful at its heart, Christendom may hope to live down its ape and tiger elements."

There, I am persuaded, the voice of wisdom speaks. In theory, Jesus has been these many centuries the guide and pattern of the Christian world. In so far, however, as the attempt has been seriously made to follow his precepts, they have generally been construed in too narrow and literal fashion; and always this endeavor has been much hindered by a mediatorial scheme of Christendom's own devising. To make him now the real spiritual hero of his church, as childhood is sure to find somewhere in the life surrounding it an adorable image of what it would like to be; to make the common mind truly in love with the kind of man that Jesus was, appears to me one of the most desirable ends that can possibly be reached.

His intensely personalistic gospel is a veritable specific for the faults and weaknesses of a mechanical age. His unwavering trust in the winning power of the spirit is a much-needed correction of the popular illusion that only compulsory forces count. His devotion to an ideal, which it may require ages yet to work out, is an immense steadying influence to that impatience which thinks that the world ought to be made all over, like a pair of shoes, while we wait. His passion for reality, his contempt for the whole art of keeping up appearances, his tenderness toward sins of weakness, and his hatred for every form of

cruelty,—all this constitutes a ceaseless rebuke for that Pharisaism which is, on the whole, the deadliest foe to man's higher life.

His thought of God means life and purity to the whole world's religious faith. His words are deep wells of wisdom, out of which mankind can never cease to draw the water of life. Our race will not forget him, or turn away from him; and there is no eminence to which the modern man can climb from which he can look down upon this Carpenter of Nazareth.